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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION TO DRC: SOME FINAL
THOUGHTS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On June 11-12 the Democratic Republic of Congo hosted a Security Council mission led by France and with eight other members participating. The U.S. was the only other P5 member represented. DPKO and mission delegations drafted a detailed account of the Council mission and their report on the Council's meetings and consultations has been finalized and is being forwarded separately. The Security Council will meet in early July in a public session to present this report and allow regional players an opportunity to comment on the DRC transition. In addition, Embassy Kinshasa's thorough report (Kinshasa 942) provides the highlights of the Security Council mission's meetings. USUN wishes to provide some final comments on that visit and the Congo's fragile political transition. The SC mission met its primary mission objective by providing an unequivocal message on the necessity of adhering to the DRC electoral calendar. The mission also focused on the urgent need for renewed attention to security sector reform and foreshadowed demands for fresh, post-transition efforts to achieve better governance and economic reform. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) USUN PolMinCouns had a useful exchange with Ambassador Meece and selected members of his country team on June 11; U.S. mission views helped to shape the best approach for the UNSC mission. Ambassador and Country Team members focused on the priority issue of security and the reform of the Army as the most critical element in supporting the transition. As militias are disarmed and demobilized, addressing abuses committed by DRC security forces becomes an ever more salient issue and one that is attracting growing media attention. They urged the mission to press for realistic goals in integrating military units and more emphasis on the quality and effectiveness of troops and less on numerical quotas or goals. This demanded better accountability from military leadership on issues ranging from transparency in handling of military salaries to curbing human rights and sexual violence in often undisciplined (and unpaid) troops. Mission members had several occasions, including with President Kabila, to raise the issue of military leadership and the need for effective political oversight.

¶3. (SBU) Country Team expressed cautious confidence in the electoral preparations and timetable and noted that, despite some problems with media access and harassment of candidates, the electoral playing field should permit a credible vote whose outcome will deserve respect and acceptance. Attempts to raise ethnically divisive issues, which have surfaced even in advance of the formal campaign, should be firmly rebuffed. They urged Council members to turn back efforts by some political parties to start an open-ended "political dialogue" that would further delay elections. Mission members clearly and repeatedly delivered the message that Congo's transition must proceed according to the current electoral timetable; a

variety of mechanisms already exist to pursue dialogue among political actors and further delay risks effectively disenfranchising the 25 million registered voters. Finally, Ambassador Meece suggested that the UNSC mission begin a discussion about possible changes in MONUC's mandate and shifting resources and priorities after the mandate next expires September 30, keeping in mind that the full political transition may not be completed until early next year and that MONUC now effectively serves as the public administration and logistics network for a shattered country.

A Plan for Peacetime Economy and an Encounter with the Parties

14. (SBU) Two other side meetings during the Council visit were especially noteworthy. Council members met separately with Christophe Lutundula, a parliamentarian who headed a commission that prepared a hard-hitting report about dubious resource exploitation contracts and gross mismanagement and corruption in public enterprises. Thus far parliament has suppressed a debate on this report, although it was completed over a year ago. Lutundula, focusing on governance and management of public enterprises in the post-transition era, noted the absence of political will (and political capital) to tackle controversial issues in the run up to elections. After the vote, he noted, the people will rightly demand an end to the pillage of Congo's resources and some tangible benefit from them and the political transition. He argued that if such an improvement in people's lives and the way they are governed is not quickly apparent, the population will turn their backs on the political transition and the new government. He strongly criticized the lack of transparency in current budget administration. Lutundula later provided a non-paper for all mission members that contained his blueprint for the reform of resource exploitation and the

transition from a war economy to peace and accountable government. He urged that the Council and the international community demand early action from the new government in implementing the findings and recommendations of his report.

15. (SBU) In a raucous and occasionally chaotic meeting with over 200 political party representatives Security Council representatives were treated to a passionate demonstration of Congolese political expression. Interventions and floor debate became so heated at points that UN security staff were clearly concerned that the event might get out of hand, but the firm but sympathetic chairing of the meeting by Independent Election Commission President Malu Malu kept the situation under control. Several Council members remarked that the display, while unruly, was evidence of a vibrant and surprisingly free-wheeling political debate, albeit one that is still takes place around personalities and ethnic identification rather than policies. Many of the party representatives present complained of restrictions on campaigning and lack of media access but none noted that the official campaign period had not yet started. Many representatives called for fresh rounds of political consultations and varying periods of delay in the vote itself. Council members, however, took the opportunity to reaffirm publicly and clearly the UNSC insistence on the established electoral timetable, noting that elections were a step in the transition process, not its end goal. Members also underscored warnings against the use of ethnically charged hate messages in campaigning.

Post-Transition Reforms Depend on Getting Through the Political Transition

16. (SBU) Although many Council members began this visit with a determination to focus on post-transition arrangements and reforms, it was difficult not to get caught up in addressing current election controversies and short-term

security problems. It was also evident that the political space and will for sweeping reforms will be extremely limited before the political transition is complete. Longer-term improvements in governance will have to wait, although commitments were sought from political leaders, including President Kabila, for future action. Conversations with business leaders and IFI representatives made it clear that the precarious security situation remained the main and overriding impediment to development and economic activity. This did not prevent the mission from taking a firm line on the need for immediate attention to abuses of security forces and a commitment to the creation of a professional, integrated army that is protecting rather than preying on the civilian population with impunity. Insofar as security sector reform is intimately bound up in the issue of corruption in the payment of military salaries, immediate attention must also be given to improving transparency in managing resources and demanding accountability in military leadership.

¶17. (SBU) Closely linked to the need for continuing progress on security sector reforms is the looming issue of the expected six-month or more transition between the first round of presidential voting and the final installation of the new government. During the transition the DRC interim administration will face new pressures brought on by the suspension of the IMF program and declining budgetary support from other sources. These difficulties will be compounded by ill-defined lines of authority during a lengthy political transition and an already weak central government administration. Challenges to the transition government from disappointed office seekers with dormant links to militia forces cannot be ruled out. Transition arrangements during the period before an expected second round of presidential voting will need all the shoring up they can get by renewing progress toward professional security forces and reducing abuses of the civilian population, which call government authority into question.

Some Final Notes

¶18. (SBU) Kabila seemed genuinely convinced that he has no need for electoral manipulation or campaign machinations given his strong hand going into the final weeks before elections. He also made firm promises to Council members to stop others' efforts to sway the election outcome. The defensive comments by Kabila's vice presidential rivals suggest that they too are becoming convinced of his commanding position, although few observers believed that Kabila can avoid a run off vote later this year.

¶19. (SBU) A brief Council members' meeting with DRC Sanctions Panel Chair, Ambassador Ka, was sufficient to provide ample evidence of extensive Ugandan involvement in arms smuggling into eastern Congo. This Ugandan involvement should be highlighted in the Council's July review of DRC sanctions.

¶10. (SBU) To answer Council concerns about media access for the host of smaller parties contesting the election, President Kabila indicated to the Council delegation he would release \$1m set aside for this purpose which had been bottled up in government channels.

¶11. (SBU) All the political players who have engaged in the process expressed at least a nominal strong commitment to the July 30 election deadline, despite a range of reservations and complaints about the electoral process. The key factor will be whether all parties, including the UDPS which is sitting out the election, will accept its results peacefully.

¶12. (SBU) Further progress on ensuring that the military is paid will increase momentum in both army integration and the DDR process as recruits can be more certain of an assured income.

¶13. (SBU) Extensive changes in military leadership will be required to achieve more professional forces, beginning with the highly questionable and corrupt leadership of Army Chief of Staff Kisimbia.

¶14. (SBU) Good, if not foolproof, security and logistics plans seem to be in place for the July 30 vote; EUFOR is an evident and surprisingly robust plus. There seemed to be a general consensus that serious trouble was more likely following the election rather than preceding it, but also some confidence that the capacity of some likely spoilers, including the UDPS and former militia leaders, was diminishing.

¶15. (SBU) Planning for governing the country during the prolonged period between the first round of presidential voting and the final installation of a new government and assembly is too vague and plagued by uncertainty. The same applies for a thorough review of MONUC's mandate in preparation for the post-transition rebuilding of the country. The Security Council should ask DPKO to prepare specific options to shift resources to post-election needs and intensifying security reforms.

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